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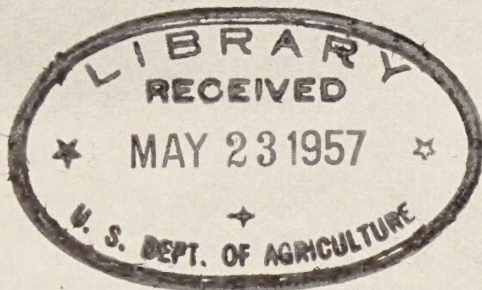
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NANTAHALA

National Forest

North Carolina

December 1956



F-386657

Nantahala Gorge

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

U.S. Forest Service

Southern Region

NANTAHALA NATIONAL FOREST

"Nantahala" is a Cherokee Indian word meaning "land of the noonday sun." It was applied to a region in the southwestern tip of North Carolina—a region of mile-high peaks, heavily forested slopes, narrow valleys, and steep-walled canyons, in the bottoms of which the sun shone only late in the mornings and disappeared early in the afternoons.

The Nantahala National Forest includes much of this area. It is one of 149 national forests administered by the Forest Service of the United States Department of Agriculture and managed under the multiple-use principle of the greatest good for the greatest number of people. This means that all forest resources—water, timber, wildlife, and recreation—are protected, developed, and used at the same time with due regard to the relative importance of each.

The Nantahala is one of five national forests in the southern Appalachians. It extends over an area roughly 30 miles wide and 80 miles long in an east-west direction. About one-third of this, 425,000 acres, is Government-owned. The remainder of the area is in towns, farms, and other private ownership. Approximately 60,000 people, mostly in rural communities, live within its boundaries. Two million people are within easy one-day motoring distance, and tourists from all parts of the United States use the forest.

This region was settled by pioneers who came down the valleys from Pennsylvania. As they pressed south and west, the country blazed with Indian warfare. Then, in 1838, most of the Indians were moved to Indian Territory in Oklahoma and their lands were ceded to the white settlers. Some of the dispossessed Cherokees evaded the forced migration, and their descendants now live in the Cherokee Indian Reservation adjacent to the Nantahala forest.



Cherokee Indians at worship, Snowbird Creek, Cherokee Indian Reservation.

The new settlers cleared numerous areas for their farms. Gradually the valleys and many of the steep slopes were placed under cultivation. The best timber was cut for buildings. Fires frequently burned through the remaining forest areas. Although acting with good intent, the settlers were destructive to the timber and the soil. Before long, much of the land was badly eroded and unproductive, and once-clear streams were heavy with mud. To help correct these conditions, a national-forest purchase unit was established here as early as 1911, and in 1920 the Nantahala was proclaimed a national forest.

WATER

Watershed protection and management was a primary objective in the establishment of the Nantahala National Forest. Ten rivers—the Nantahala, Cheoah, Tuckasegee, Hiwassee, Valley, Cullasaja, Little Tennessee, Chattooga, Whitewater, and Toxaway—rise there and tumble down through the gorges and valleys to feed such large river systems as the Tennessee and the Savannah.

This area is one of the highest rainfall-producing belts in the United States. Rainfall on the forest averages about 70 inches per year. In some districts it reaches 100 inches or more. The topography is rugged and steep, and the soils often deep and admirably suited to the infiltration and storage of large quantities of water. These mountain soils, however, lose their capacity to absorb water when cleared of their forest cover or otherwise exposed. They become tightly packed by cattle trampling. If misuse has been severe, rainwater is unable to enter the soil quickly enough to prevent rapid surface runoff. Erosion and flash runoff result.

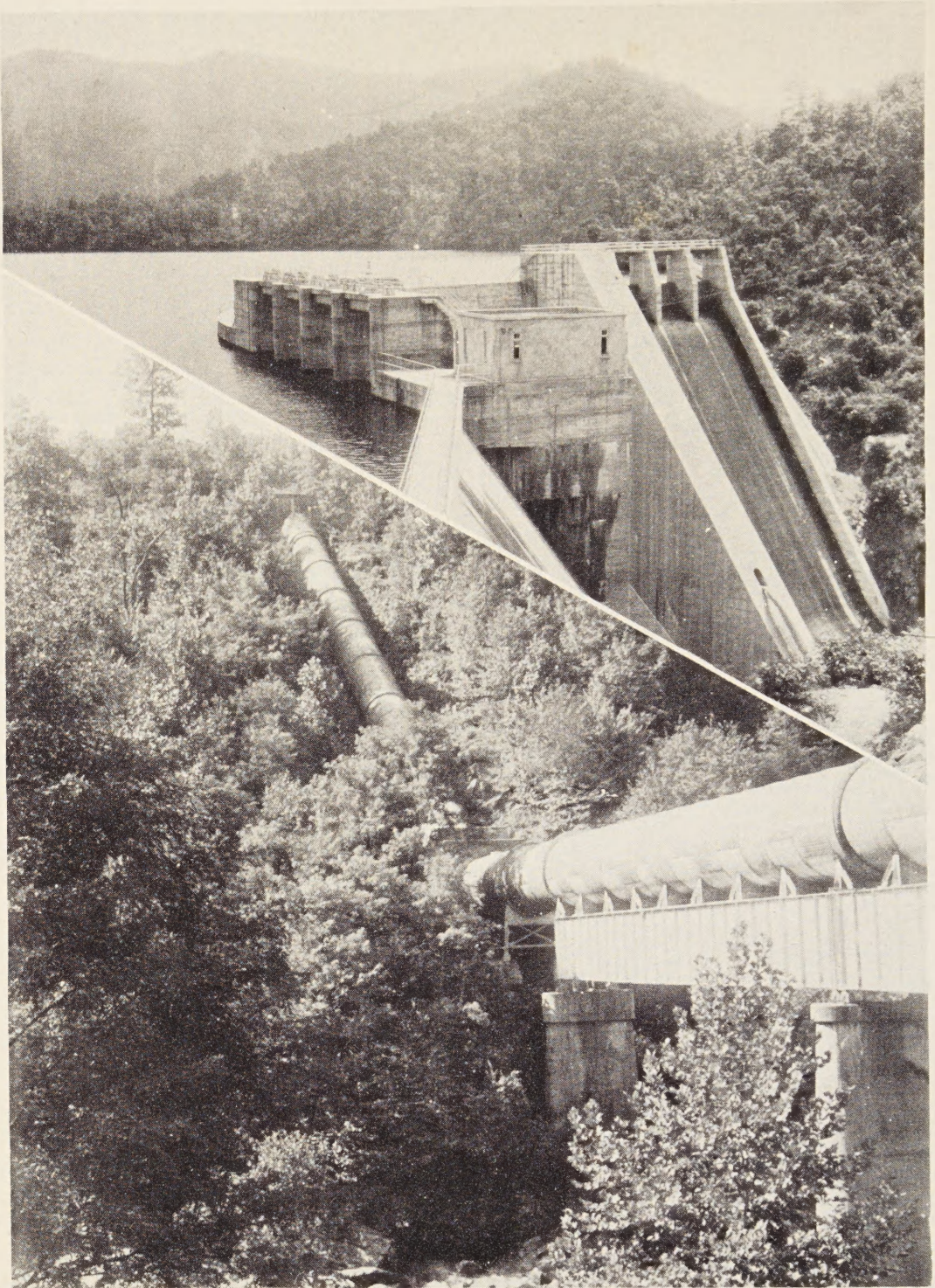
By contrast, under well-protected and properly managed forest conditions, the force of the raindrops is broken by the cover of plants and the water is rapidly absorbed by the porous soil layers which release it slowly into streams. Water flow thus becomes useful, serving the vital needs of the communities, industries, and farms. Well-regulated movement of clear water permits even smaller streams to maintain a fairly uniform flow throughout the year.

The importance of the water-control function of this forest area is illustrated by the fact that nine major reservoirs for the production of hydroelectric power, for flood control, and for recreation have been constructed wholly or partially within the boundaries of the Nantahala. These manmade lakes are Hiwassee, Fontana, Glenville, Nantahala, Santeetlah, Chatuge, Emory, Cheoah, and Apalachia. They depend for the flow and quality of their water upon the protection and wise management of the forests on the slopes above them.

In addition to these dependent uses, the forest supports 400 miles of good fishing streams and supplies some 60,000 people in rural communities with top-quality water.

Because of its favorable climate and good forest conditions, and because of the importance of its water resources, the Nantahala was selected as the site of special experiments and investigations to determine the relation of forest land to stream flow. The 5,400-acre Coweeta Hydrological Laboratory near Franklin, N. C., on the headwaters of the Little Tennessee River, is the only study area of its kind in the eastern United States.

The soils of this outdoor laboratory are very deep, up to 30 feet or more, thus providing excellent storage for rainwater. Scores of rain and stream gages and observation wells have been installed on various small watersheds that make up the area, in order to measure the course of water from the time it falls to the earth until it enters the main stream. Other special equipment is employed to determine the effects of timber cutting, logging, fire, woods grazing, and land clearing on the flow and quality of the water and the silt content of streams.



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Santeetlah dam and flume bringing water across "hill and dale" to power plant. Nearly all the drainage of Lake Santeetlah is from national-forest land.

These studies have the general aim of developing methods for improved forest management in the interest of obtaining better and more abundant water supplies. Studies at the Bent Creek Experimental Forest near Asheville showed that properly managed forest land absorbed up to 4 inches of rainfall in an hour. Similar soil, stripped of its trees and robbed of its topsoil through fire and erosion, absorbed less than one-fifth of an inch of rain in an hour. Both the Bent Creek Experimental Forest and the Coweeta laboratory are under the direction of the Southeastern Forest Experiment Station at Asheville.

TIMBER

The Nantahala National Forest was originally established to protect the headwaters of the Tennessee and Savannah Rivers. Along with this major purpose, the forest serves as an important producer of timber for a great variety of forest products. Watershed protection and timber management can be accomplished harmoniously on the same area. Harvesting of timber is done with regard to the protection of slopes from erosion and streams from muddying and sedimentation.

The principal timber trees in order of importance by volume are: Red oak, scarlet oak, chestnut oak, white oak, hemlock, yellow-poplar, white pine, black oak, and basswood. These trees furnish logs for lumber and veneer, extract wood for tannic acid, and material for furniture and wood novelties.

The forest now contains 650 million board-feet of sawtimber and 400,000 cords of merchantable pulpwood. In fiscal year 1956, the forest cut 18 million feet of sawtimber and 900 cords of pulpwood and similar products. The total income from sale of forest products was \$317,000. Twenty-five percent of this amount and of that obtained from other forest uses is paid to the State to be used for schools and roads in the counties in which the forest is located. An additional 10 percent is made available to the Forest Service for improvement of the roads and trails in the forest.



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Appalachian hardwoods.



A sustained timber crop provides lumber for many commercial uses.

The Forest Service does not cut its own timber or operate sawmills. Timber is sold to the highest bidder under a procedure insuring an equal opportunity to all prospective purchasers.

Harvesting of the forest products by timber operators provides an annual payroll of \$680,000 to the forest communities. Year-round employment is provided for 500 people. Management of the timber stands provides protection from fire, thinning in dense stands to stimulate growth, harvesting the proper trees, leaving thrifty straight trees of good species to grow, and building the stand through cutting only a part of the growth. Consequently, the volume of forest products to be sold each year will increase, and so will the amount of employment and wages in the local communities.

WILDLIFE

The Nantahala country, once a favorite Cherokee hunting ground, fell victim to indiscriminate hunting and fishing which seriously depleted the fish and game. Today wildlife finds much-needed shelter and food on this national forest.

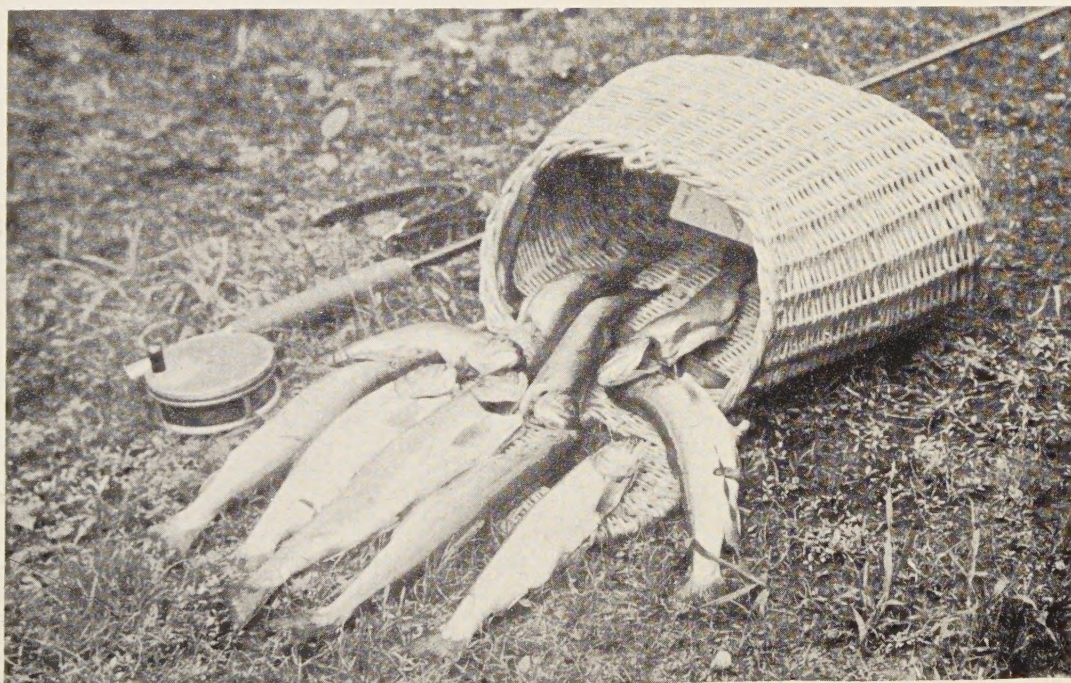
Protective measures for wildlife have been developed cooperatively by the Forest Service and the State of North Carolina. Four special areas have been established. These are the 14,000-acre Fires Creek area north of Hayesville, the 11,000-acre Wayah Wildlife Management area west of Franklin, the 23,000-acre Standing Indian area at the



Successful boar hunters after a managed hunt on the Santeetlah Game Management Area.

head of the Nantahala River, and the 37,000-acre Santeetlah area northwest of Robbinsville.

For the hunter, these areas offer opportunities seldom equaled. Some 2,300 persons a year are permitted to hunt wild boar, bear, and deer. The hunting periods and the number of hunters are regulated to assure sustained game production. As the game multiplies under good management, a balance must be maintained between the game and the natural food supply available in the protected areas. Open seasons for



A real catch of rainbow trout. Clear mountain streams beckon the angler to try his skill.

hunting, regulated in accordance with careful, periodic studies of wildlife conditions, offer a practical solution to the problem of removing surplus game.

The streams of the Nantahala are well-stocked with trout of several species. The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission in cooperation with the Forest Service annually plants many thousands of legal-sized fish to maintain the supply in the streams. At Arrowwood Glade, 7 miles west of Franklin, rearing pools provide approximately 60,000 young trout each year.

Visitors to the forest may hunt and fish subject to the State game, fish, and sanitary laws. Additional regulations apply, however, to the four special game-management areas inside the forest. Information on fishing and hunting regulations and the game hunts may be obtained from the Forest Supervisor in Asheville or from the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, Raleigh, N. C.

FOREST FIRE CONTROL

Fire is the dreaded enemy of all forest resources. Fires destroy young trees, the timber crop of the future, and damage older trees; burn off ground litter, causing erosion, and flooding and silting of streams and reservoirs; make the forest unsuitable for wildlife; and destroy its beauty.

When a fire is discovered, all other activities must be dropped, if necessary, until the fire is extinguished. Thus, fires are costly, not only in damage to forest resources, but in time and money for suppression.

Before the national forests were established in the southern Appalachians, 30 to 50 percent of the area burned annually. Within 10 years



Fire—the enemy of the forest.

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the Forest Service had cut the annual losses on national-forest land to 3 percent. The average loss is now one-third of 1 percent. On the Nantahala in 1955, 41 fires burned 1,289 acres of national-forest land. Constant vigilance by the forest fire-control organization is necessary to keep losses to this low figure.

All except 2 of the 41 fires on the Nantahala were man caused—by someone's carelessness with fire. They could have been prevented. If each visitor to the Nantahala National Forest, or resident therein, will remember that a carelessly tossed match, a smoldering cigarette, a live pipe heel, or a neglected campfire may destroy in a few hours what it has taken Nature hundreds of years to build, and put his smoke or campfire dead out, man-caused fires can be practically eliminated. You can help protect the Nantahala forest from fire.

The towers and observatories, noticed at high points throughout the forest, are vital links in the fire-protection system. Vigilant observers man these towers day and night during the fire season, on the alert for telltale smoke that may mean the start of a forest fire. These lookout points are connected with one another and with a central headquarters by telephone and radio, and the towermen usually discover and locate a fire within a few minutes after it starts. Since the first hour is the critical period in fighting fires, crews equipped with fire-fighting tools are rushed at once to the danger points by means of roads and trails that were built for such emergencies.

Forest fire fighting is a highly organized activity, similar in many respects to the military operations of a well-drilled army. Visitors are always welcome at the lookout towers, where they may have this activity further explained and may see the fire detecting and reporting equipment. Splendid views of the surrounding mountains may also be had from these points.

RECREATION

Nearly a half million visits by vacationists are made to the Nantahala every year. The hundreds of thousands of acres of wooded mountain lands, with their many miles of trout streams, hiking trails and bridle paths, picnicking areas and public camping grounds, offer relaxation and a "feel of nature." The mountain scenery with its blanket of



Sentinel of the forests—a fire lookout tower.

green foliage seasonally garnished by the frosty white of the dogwood, the delicate pink of the mountain-laurel, and the varied colors of the rhododendron is a memorable sight. The great diversity of plant species—there are more than 350 species of shrubs and trees—fascinates both the student and the vacationist.

To enjoy wild flowers in all their splendor, the following periods are suggested:

Dogwood.....	April 15–May 1
Mountain-laurel (also known locally as mountain ivy).....	June 1–30
	(mid-June is best)
Purple rhododendron (good view on Standing Indian Mountain).....	June 1–15
Pink rhododendron (also known locally as laurel).....	July 1–15
Azalea (also known locally as wild honeysuckle; good view from Wayah Bald).....	June 15–July 1
Autumnal coloration.....	around October 15.

A network of Federal, State, and Forest Service roads permits the traveler to drive into the very heart of the forest. For the hiker, there are 250 miles of forest trails, in addition to the 60-mile section of the Appalachian Trail, within the forest boundaries. More than a hundred thousand people each year visit the improved areas with facilities for camp-



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A mountain beauty. Purple rhododendron in bloom on Standing Indian Mountain in mid-June.

The memorial tract contains many huge trees hundreds of years old. Some of them are 80 inches in diameter and more than 150 feet high. They include yellow-poplar, hemlock, oak, sycamore, basswood, beech, and many other species. The tract is maintained in its primitive and natural state. No live trees or plants may be cut or removed.

Points of Interest

Bridal Veil Falls.—On US 64, 2 miles west of Highlands. Highway passes under the falls.

Cullasaja Falls and Gorge.—On US 64 midway between Franklin and Highlands.

Nantahala River and Gorge.—On US 19 between Topton and Wesser. This is the gorge of “noonday sun.”

John Byrne Memorial Tower.—On mile-high Wayah Bald, 17 miles west of Franklin, on Nantahala Road (F. S. Road 69). Extensive views of Appalachians from stone observatory.

Fish Rearing Pools.—At Arrowwood Glade, 7 miles west of Franklin on Wayah forest road. Twelve pools, operated in cooperation with the State; 60,000 trout fry can be grown from 1 inch to 7 inches in 6 months for planting in forest streams.

Wesser Bald Fire Tower.—On Appalachian Trail, 12 miles from US 19 over forest roads from Nantahala Gorge.

Standing Indian Mountain.—On Appalachian Trail, off US 64, between Franklin and Hayesville. Fine mountain views. Purple rhododendron at best June 1–15.

Lakes and Dams

Hiwassee.—Near Murphy; built by TVA in 1940.

Fontana.—Near Tapoca; built by TVA in 1945.

Cheoah.—Directly below Fontana.

Glenville.—Between Cashiers and Sylva.

Nantahala.—Between Franklin and Andrews.

Emory.—Near Franklin.

Santeetlah.—On US 129, northwest of Robbinsville.

Chatuge.—On US 64, near Hayesville.

Apalachia.—Adjoining Lake Hiwassee.

Scenic Roads and Trails

US 64 from Franklin via Cullasaja Gorge, Highlands, and continuing east. The same route west from Franklin, crossing the Nantahala Mountains.

US 19 from Murphy via Andrews, Topton, the Nantahala Gorge, and Balsam Gap to Asheville.

US 129 from Topton via Robbinsville and Lake Santeetlah to Tapoca and Fontana Dam.

US 23 from Franklin across the Cowee Mountains to US 19A at Dillsboro.

N. C. 107 along the Tuckasegee River.

N. C. 28 from Franklin north along the Little Tennessee River.

N. C. 28 from US 19 to Fontana Dam via Almond, N. C., and Johnson Gap.

Forest Service Road 12 from US 64, 4 miles west of Franklin, across the Nantahala Mountains to US 19, in the Nantahala Gorge.

Forest Service Road 27 along the Nantahala River from US 64 at Rainbow Springs.

Forest Service Road 30 from Chatuge Reservoir, across the Tusquitee Mountains via Tuni Gap.

Forest Service Road 13 from Andrews, across the Snowbird Mountains to Robbinsville; State road around western shore of Lake Santeetlah to



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Even back in the hills water from the forest does its bit.

West Buffalo; Forest Service Road 150 through Santeetlah Gap to US 129 at Santeetlah Dam.

Appalachian Trail from Mount Oglethorpe, Ga., to Mount Katahdin, Maine, a distance of 2,050 miles. Sixty miles of this trail is in the forest where it follows the crest of the Cheoah and Nantahala Mountain Ranges. Trail camps with lean-to shelters are at Deep Gap, White Oak Forest Camp, Wayah Crest, Burningtown Gap, Cable Gap, and Wesser Creek.

Improved Recreation Areas

Arrowwood Glade.—Seven miles west of Franklin by US 64 and the Wayah forest road. Bathing and picnicking.

Wayah Crest.—Six miles west of Arrowwood Glade in the Nantahala Range. Overnight lean-to and picnic facilities.

Wayah Bald.—On Wayah Bald 4 miles north of Wayah Gap. Picnic area.

Shooting Creek Vista.—On US 64 near Glade Gap. One of the most beautiful views on the forest. Picnicking facilities.

Deep Gap.—Seven miles by forest road south of US 64 near Rainbow Springs. Picnicking and camping. From Deep Gap the Appalachian Trail leads to the top of Standing Indian Mountain, 4,500 feet above sea level.

White Oak Forest Camp.—South of US 64, 15 miles west of Franklin. Camping facilities.

Lake Cherokee.—Eleven miles west of Murphy and half a mile north of State 294. Camping space.

Grape Creek.—On Hiwassee Lake along Joe Brown Highway. Picnicking, camping, swimming, boating, and fishing.

Bob Allison Place.—Picnic area and campground on Tuni Gap Road.

Britton Creek.—Three miles north of Andrews. Picnicking and camping.

Gorge Dell.—On US 19 in the Nantahala Gorge. A small picnic area.

Wesser.—On Appalachian Trail 1 mile south of US 19. Camping facilities.

Burningtown Gap.—On Appalachian Trail 3 miles south of Wesser Bald. Camping facilities.

Van Hook Glade.—On US 64, 15 miles southeast of Franklin, in the Cullasaja Gorge. Trailer and tent campsites. Adjunct to Cliffside Lake area.

Cliffside Lake.—Fifteen miles from Franklin and 6 miles from Highlands off US 64. Eight acres; picnic areas; bathing beach; bathhouse; shelters; amphitheater for 500 people 3 miles horse trails; hiking trails; beautiful view from overlook. Operated by concessioner.

Dry Falls.—On US 64, 16 miles from Franklin and 4 miles from Highlands. Sixty-foot waterfall in rugged gorge. Scenic trail leads behind the falls. Seats and parking area.

Snowbird Creek.—On forest road 7 miles west of Robbinsville. Picnic area and natural swimming hole.

White Pines.—Near entrance to Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest. Picnic area and campground.

Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest.—Fifteen miles northwest of Robbinsville. Picnic facilities.

Ammons Camp.—Small picnic and camping area southeast of Highlands.

Glenn Falls.—Scenic area 3 miles south of Highlands. Hiking trails.

Source of Information

Forest supervisor and rangers are always glad to be of service to forest visitors. Call upon them for such help or advice as you may need. The Forest Supervisor is located at Asheville, N. C., in the Pioneer Building, and District Rangers at Franklin, Murphy, Highlands, and Robbinsville, N. C. Other sources of information are as follows:

Hotel and resort accommodations.—Chambers of Commerce of towns in or near the forest.

Fishing and hunting.—North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, Raleigh, N. C.

Great Smoky Mountains National Park.—Park Superintendent, National Park Service, Gatlinburg, Tenn.

Adjacent national forests.—Chattahoochee National Forest, Gainesville, Ga.; Sumter National Forest, Columbia, S. C.; Cherokee National Forest, Cleveland, Tenn.; Pisgah National Forest, Asheville, N. C.

Other national forests of the South.—Regional Forester, Southern Region, U. S. Forest Service, 50 Seventh St. NE., Atlanta 23, Ga.



Picnicking can be fun, Cliffside Lake Recreation Area.

F-386655



Camping in the forest provides outdoor enjoyment for young and old, Van Hook Glade.

FIRE RULES

1. **MATCHES**—Be sure your match is out—dead out. Break it in two before you throw it away.

2. **SMOKING**—Be sure your pipe ashes and cigar and cigarette stubs are out—dead out—before you throw them away. Never throw them into brush, leaves, or needles. When driving, use the ashtray in your car.

3. **CAMPFIRES**—Before building a fire, scrape away all flammable material from the spot. Keep your fire small. Never build it against trees or logs, or near brush. Put out your campfire by stirring the coals while soaking them with water. Never leave your fire until the last spark is out—dead out.

4. **BRUSH BURNING**—Plow a firebreak around the area to be burned. Start burning around 4 p. m. when the wind is still. Never burn brush during windy weather. Be safe—have fire-fighting tools and help handy. Notify your neighbors and the Forest Service that you plan to burn. Never leave the fire while there is the slightest danger that it might create a wild fire. You must observe State brush-burning laws.

5. **IF YOU FIND A FOREST FIRE**—Put it out if you can. If you cannot put it out, report it to the forest supervisor or rangers, at any of their headquarters as indicated on the map.

HELP PREVENT FIRES



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*Lower Cullasaja Falls. Cullasaja is an Indian word meaning
"pouring sugar."*

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LEGEND :

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